DECISION

The morning newspapers carried the story of the arrest of the Council of the Unemployed and my escape. This ended my work for the unemployed. I had been the official head of the organization too long to be of any use to it while hiding from the police. Thus my escape from the prison proved futile as far as the Council was concerned. From a purely personal point of view, it would be sensible simply to surrender to the police. What did they have against me? The old Borovenka affair, the Council, the meetings. . . . If I surrendered now, I would probably be subjected to a year in prison and deportation for a year or two. Then I could go back to my books, reading, writing. But I did not like this simple solution.

At the first opportunity, I crossed the border into Finland and settled in Terioki, where many party workers were in hiding. My plans were vague. Before thinking of the future I wanted to write a report on the movement of the unemployed. My friends brought me the files of our Council and other documents. It was wonderful relaxation to live in a little cottage, half buried under snow, and to work on the manuscript from early morning until late at night, with only brief interruptions when somebody knocked at the door.

By the end of November the book was ready, and I was again facing the question of where I should go from there. I felt that my decision would determine the course of my life for many years to come.

Lenin tried to persuade me to go to Switzerland with him and take over one of the party periodicals, promising me full independence in my work. But I knew I would not be independent working with Lenin and I could not commit myself to go the whole way with him. In addition, as time went on I became increasingly reluctant to leave Russia. Pressed by Lenin to explain my reasons, I said, "In the past two years we have been calling on the people to revolt. Many of those who have followed our call have paid with their lives or their freedom. We cannot desert those who are left."

"If all revolutionaries thought this way," Lenin replied, "the cause of the revolution would be lost."

"We have piled up too many bills," I insisted. "Some of us must stay to pay."

Lenin looked at me with an expression of understanding and sympathy. He did not smile. "This is a conflict between feelings and the cold logic of the revolution," he said. "You have decided to